

THE HELPFUL HOME

NEWSLETTER & RADIO LISTENER NEWS

Issue #16

SPECIAL EDITION

Summer 2006

Some information about this newsletter



Here is your new Summer issue of the Helpful Home newsletter, your “gift” from [STONEHOLLOW, Inc. FINE HOME INSPECTIONS](#). Well, I asked for hot...and we've certainly been getting our share of hot and humid as well as quite a bit of heavy rain, some flooding and hail, yes hail. Summer should be the time for relaxing in the backyard on a hammock but it's also a great time to get some needed work done around your castle. I am a great fan of preventative maintenance but Summer really is the right time to get projects done that are apt to be annoying or difficult during colder weather, so our seasonal check list will offer up some projects and check up ideas. I admit we are experiencing a shift in the oft crazy real estate market here in Fairfield County. Buyers are more apt to see a little more leverage room and a little less pressure in the deals. Things are still selling, but a little slower paced. This is better for all involved and may provoke some more time for due diligence instead of panic. This season we will be moving the Redding school to New Haven and looking at alternative sites for the Manhattan school as the run from Stamford to Wall street is just not fun. I'm gearing up for my Las Vegas presentation on Wet Basements & Crawlspace and anxiously awaiting the printing of my new appliance inspection book. I hope your Summer is going well and that your home is not so needy that you forget to spend some time in the hammock as well. At the radio station we have just completed a series of shows on several environmental issues. We've done Buried Oil Tanks, Lead, Asbestos, Mold, Radon and we are

bringing in some guests for some important topics of interest. We try to make first thing Saturday morning interesting and thought provoking. Lots of listeners have been calling in each week. I'm still working on a listener's Special Dinner at a local area restaurant. Thanks to Karp's Hardware, Stamford Lighting Fixture Co, Associated Water, Homeguard Environ. DeerDefence and Kidde Corp. for helping fund the show and keeping our 6th year on the air.

We hope this issue will help identify projects you should be monitoring around your house and that the information both on the show, and in the newsletter help you to understand how to “do it” better. As in the past issues we have included photos, helpful tips, and a Summer preventative maintenance list for your home.

If you need an answer to a particular question or a solution to a task... e-mail your question at steve@stonehollow.com. Steve Gladstone



Mel Wilkes, Steve & Matt Gladstone
Let us help you find the real condition of your home...for peace of mind call :

[Stonehollow 800-356-9611](tel:800-356-9611)

Summer 2006 Home Check List:

As summer's go, we've been wet and crazy hot... here's some things to check during this typically sticky and steamy season:

A/C : Wall units, Window units & Central Air... what do they have in common?

Filters !, clean them when dirty, if there always dirty...clean them more often !
Drip pans and condensate pipes...keep them clean to avoid poor operation and mildew.
Use only heavy duty extension cords (if you need one at all).

Gutters:

Yup...they still get dirty and clogged in summer. Make sure they are running freely and not clogged. Clogged gutters are a significant contributor to wet basements.

Siding:

That black smudge is probably mildew, pressure washing with plain water and detergent or a little bleach solution will clean up and freshen up the siding. Be sure not to use too much pressure or too much bleach. Roofs can be cleaned as well, but be careful not to harm the shingles with high pressure.

Chimneys:

Fixing chimneys should be done in warm weather. This is the perfect time to have heavy usage chimneys cleaned, and carefully checked for damaged mortar and cracked crowns. Watch bricks on top courses. Make sure you have chimney caps and screens.

Hose Bibbs, spigots, faucets:

You know those water thingy's with valves on them... make sure they do not leak.

Yard stuff:

Make sure standing water is dumped out regularly around the yard to reduce mosquito breeding & West Nile virus.
Spray rough areas around your property for ticks.

Tighten all swingset hardware and sand and stain wood with wood preservative.

Check that propane tank so you don't run out.

Add sealant on the driveway to extend its life.

Spray hemlocks for aphids.

Prune trees & shrubs too close to the home

Replace broken window well covers.

Safety items:

Check batteries on Smoke, Heat & Carbon Monoxide detectors, Make sure extinguishers are charged, and hung in plain sight.

Keep combustibles away from heating equipment.

Make sure pool gates self close and latch.

Test deck railings, make sure they are sturdy.

Replace plastic dryer vent lines with new metal ducts and positive closing flappers.

Check washer hoses for worn conditions

Check for blown bulbs and replace.

Make sure oven hoods are clean and filters de-greased.

Check sump pumps for safe operation.

And when you're done with this list, feel free to suggest a few more by calling into the show when we are on the air...lets all have a happy and safe summer.

Summertime and the Bees are stinging...what can You do to avoid problems ?

Just the other day I was cleaning the yard near the woodpile and I noticed quite a bit of flying insect activity. I thought they were flies picnicing on some dead mouse but when the first wasp attacked I realized I had made a foolish assumption. Most bees are protective of their nests and will send for reinforcements if you venture too near. This particular nest was in the soil and not easily seen. I was lucky to run away and protect myself from multiple stings. When stung make sure you remove the stinger and apply ice to minimize the pain and swelling. If you have multiple stings or you are allergic get yourself immediate medical attention. Anaphalactic shock can cause your heartbeat to speed up, swelling to increase, and

make breathing and swallowing difficult. If you are alone dial 911 for help. I'm very vindictive when I get stung. I generally march right over to Karp's Hardware and buy every known Wasp spray available. For best results nests should be sprayed at dusk when the nest is full and most of the wasps are resting inside. There are sprays that can be aimed from 15-20 feet away, I like that! And others that are foamy and coat the nest with insecticide so stragglers will get the treatment as well. Be careful to read all instructions and do not overspray or spray in windy conditions. Finally be careful what you kill. Honeybee nests should be dealt with by professionals, as the honeycomb must be properly removed to avoid rotting smells.

Are You Listening?

Tune in WSTC 1400 am and WNLK 1350 am or listen to us on www.stonehollow.com on the radio archive page, and hear us on your computer! Our own Steve Gladstone... sometimes Matt and Mark Gladstone are on the air Saturday mornings on "Around the House" from 8 to 9 am. We discuss home issues, maintenance, and safety. Sandi Gladstone will often give an update on the local Real Estate world... And you can call in and speak to us. It's fun to listen, and you'll learn how to do things around your home. Tune in each week for trivia questions, prizes, lots of useful home info and we may just have the answer to the question you've wanted to ask.



Sandi chats on Real Estate Market...

**Call us Saturday 8-9 in the studio at
203-845-3044 for questions & prizes !**

Thermal imaging allows a glimpse inside to detect heat loss and water intrusion... We are now offering you an opportunity to experience the newest technology to examine your home. Allowing you to be able to spot areas of substantial heat loss and energy waste. This technology using thermal spectrum analysis and can see heat loss and digitally display the image for a snapshot of your home like no other. It can also find stubborn leaks and hidden moisture intrusion. Pointing towards reducing the growth of mold & odors. If you would like a thermal scan of your home performed, call us for pricing and we'll get you on the schedule. This may save you thousands of dollars. A typical exterior scan of your house is available for \$500 and can pinpoint where you are losing heat, or where water is getting in.

Help Your Friends:

Know someone looking to buy a home? Let them know we'd be happy to help them get the best home inspection services. If we don't serve their area, we will refer a great home inspector who can. We promise to help your friends with the most important purchase of their lives!

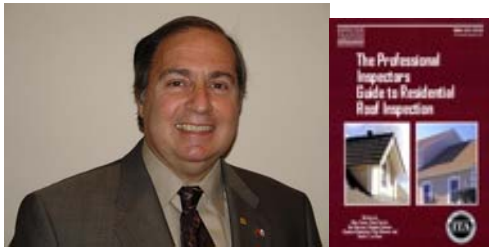
For your protection:

Hire an inspector who has lots of experience, technical knowledge, attends annual training & seminars and is a Certified Member of ASHI.

Summer Grill Tips: [from USDA.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

Safe temperatures means safe eating... when grilling whole poultry, poultry breasts, or ground poultry make sure the meat reaches 165° F. Beef, Veal, Lamb for medium rare 145° F. Medium 160°F for Pork and Hamburgers 160° F

Never bring a grill indoors !
Never leave a grill unattended



Steve Gladstone, Author

Steve is working on a new book on Thermal Imaging. He has just sent his “Appliance Inspection” book to the publisher, and his book on Roofing (Professional Inspectors Guide to Residential Roofing), with several of the ITA instructors is now available. If you would like to buy the roofing book call Steve at 327-6824 and we’ll send it out. \$59.00 plus tax & shipping.

The Great House Project...

As Summer passes we are cutting down some of the trees that are too close to the house and those that have died and may drop rotting limbs during a storm...



We used much of the mulch this year to fill in low spots in the yard. Many thanks to the Almstead Tree Co. for a very professional job.

www.stonehollow.com
e-mail us at:
steve@stonehollow.com



Still treed but with 8 fewer maybe we’ll get the lawn to grow. Next we need a stump grinder !

Some Photos from the field:



These “Corrugated drain traps are not legal repairs as the piping will catch hair and grease and easily cause clogs. If you have a set up like this have a plumber fix it.



Tile grout deterioration will let water get behind the tile. Surface mold is typical in many wet bathrooms. A good cleaning and re-grouting are called for to inhibit the mold & keep you safe.

Crawls & Basements:

This year I'm presenting on Crawlspace and Basements at the Kaplan Educational/ ITA Expo in Las Vegas. Some of my material will cover unsafe conditions found while sliding around on my stomach in places rarely visited by homeowners. For this newsletter let me capsulize some important areas of concern.

Rodent droppings & urine in both areas are difficult to prevent as critters seem to get inside most homes. Baiting stations set outside, filling in holes & openings and removing bird feeders are three easy ways to reduce the odds. Plastic vapor barriers on dirt floors or installing cement floors are two more. Inspectors or repairmen crawling in the dusty spaces can stir up the particles and once airborne they can be breathed. A good respirator (not paint masks) have become the rule in our business.

Wrapping pipes can insulate them from condensation and heat loss. Both can create seasonal problems. Condensation is the major contributor to moist locations in summer when mold can prosper in these wet locations. In winter heat loss can be a problem. Insulate to save heating costs.

Minor pipe leaks and corrosion can be noted when these areas are inspected. Often when running a tub or shower before going into the crawl can allow the inspector the perfect vantage point to note plumbing issues.

Carpenter ants and termites love little crawl areas, wet wood can attract them and subtle signs of insect activity can be found when the areas are inspected. Inspect for this annually.

Exterior grading will contribute water right at the foundation, where it can seep in. Many times I find water inside the crawl around window wells or vents. If you find cracks or indications of structural movement you may

need an Engineer to evaluate the foundation.

If you don't visit these areas regularly, you may have problems that are undetected.

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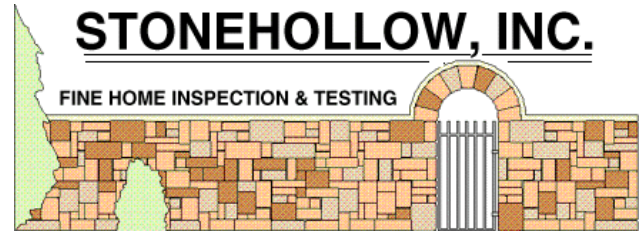
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Did you know...? Stored wood for your fireplace can last years longer if it is stored up off the ground. Covering the wood will help to keep it dry, free of leaves and debris and more apt to burn when you need it.

Thermal Inaging Technology can tell you exactly where the insulation is missing... call for a quote.



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